



ISSUE BRIEF

Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program Overview

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM:

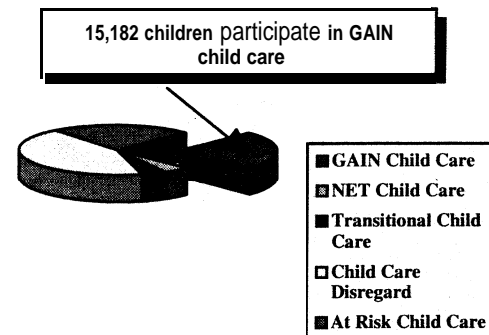
The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) provides child care assistance to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) families so parents may participate in Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) education and training programs. GAIN is one of the largest child care assistance programs that the state offers to AFDC recipients. Other child care programs that the CDSS offers to AFDC recipients are Cal Learn Child Care, Non-GAIN Education and Training (NET), Supplemental Child Care (SCC) and the AFDC Income Disregard. Two other programs that provide child care assistance to families are the Transitional Child Care (TCC) and the At Risk Child Care Programs (ARCCP). The TCC program provides child care assistance to families transitioning off AFDC. ARCCP provides child care assistance to families at risk of going on AFDC.

ADMINISTRATION OF GAIN CHILD CARE:

CDSS is responsible for statewide policy development, county allocation determinations, and is the lead agency for federal reporting. At the local level, county welfare departments (CWDs) have the responsibility to determine recipient eligibility and to issue payments. CWDs submit program statistical data monthly and claims for reimbursement quarterly to the CDSS.

FUNDING:

GAIN child care funding is 50 percent Federal, 35 percent state general fund, and 15 percent county. For the State Fiscal Year (FY) 1994/95, the cost of providing GAIN child care assistance is estimated at \$71 million.



<u>Program:</u>	<u>Average Number of Children Served per Month:</u>
■ GAIN Child Care	15,182
■ NET Child Care	2,780
■ Transitional	2,546
■ Child Care	
■ Child Care Disregard	26,429 (includes 820 participants who also receive SCC)
At Risk Child Care	14,141
Total	61,078*

* Cal Learn Program data is not available at this time.

GAIN PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

Eligibility:

- The AFDC recipient must be enrolled in the GAIN Program and attending an approved GAIN activity.
- The family must not be receiving other child care subsidies that fully meet his/her child care needs.
- The GAIN participant must need child care assistance for a child who is in the AFDC

assistance unit, or receives Foster Care or Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Security Income (SSI/SSP) benefits. The child must also be under 13 years of age or be physically or emotionally incapable of caring for himself/herself.

Child Care Costs:

- GAIN participants are not required to pay a fee for child care services.
- GAIN participants are able to choose a licensed or exempt child care provider and are reimbursed up to the GAIN payment limit, which is the 1.5 standard deviation above the mean market cost of care for that region.
- GAIN pays for child care only for the hours the parent participates in an approved education and training program. In addition, child care hours are paid during travel time from the child care provider.

Loss of Child Care Eligibility

- Child's age exceeds the age limits or the child is no longer in the home.
- The participant is no longer eligible for AFDC and/or is no longer enrolled in GAIN.

PARENTAL CHOICE:

GAIN participants can choose the type of child care that fits their needs. GAIN participants can choose center based programs, family day care homes, licensed-exempt and in-home child care providers.

ISSUES:

The inability to pay for and secure reliable child care is one of the most common barriers to employment for people on AFDC. GAIN has provided a bridge to help people on AFDC to pay for child care and ultimately lead them to the road to self-sufficiency.

Unfortunately, GAIN is only able to serve a fraction of the potentially eligible population. This is despite the fact that since 1990, the total number of GAIN participants has increased by nearly 40 percent.

Recognizing that GAIN can not serve all child care needs and to help provide more subsidized child care, the CDSS is interested in maximizing the availability of child care opportunities through GAIN. CDSS provides child care programs to AFDC recipients that need education and training to gain marketable skills. CDSS also provides child care for low-income working AFDC recipients. In addition, programs such as TCC help individuals who are trying to stay off welfare. GAIN child care programs serve on an average of more than 60,000 children each month. Child care is viewed as one of the keys to breaking the cycle of welfare dependency. The Governor's Budget for 1993/94 provided \$95 million and in this year's budget (1994/95), there is an increase of \$38 million to help make child care more accessible.

PROGRAM AUTHORITY:

Federal: Title II of the FSA of 1988; Sec. 402 (g)(1)(A) of SSA.

State: AB 312, Chapter 1568, W&I Code, Sec. 11320 et. seq.

SOURCES:

Matrix of Key Variables and Key Programs, AB 2184 Task Force, handout at 12/2/92 meeting.

Governor's Budget Summary 1994/95, submitted by Governor Pete Wilson, Governor State of California to the California Legislature 1994-95 Regular Session, January 1994.

California Department of Social Services.

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